Vol. VI. Numb. 85

THE OBSERVATOR.

The Obſervator's *Reaſons why he does not anſwer ſome Letters that are ſent him. Complainers of Perſons in publick Poſts, ought to make Application to the Parliament. The Houſe of Lords have encourag'd Diſcoveries of Abuſes. Propoſals for a Brief to relieve the Widows and Children of Seamen; and how to make a Fund for that Uſe.*

From **Saturday**, December 20. to **Wednesday**, December 24. 1707.

Country-m. YOU have a great many Letters upon your Hands to anſwer, Maſter; if you delay it too long, the Perſons who ſent 'em, will take Offence, and give you no more Informations.

Obſ. There are ſome of 'em, *Roger*, that I can take no Notice of, becauſe they are not ſign'd, nor is there any Proof offer'd to juſtify the Truth of them. Others again, tho' ſign'd, are not proper for our Cognizance. I know no Reaſon why any Body ſhould think to make a Cat's Foot of us, or that we ſhould incroach upon Mr. *Attorny*'s Office, to exhibit Complaints againſt all the particular Perſons in the Kingdom, who cheat the Queen or the Subject, eſpecially when thoſe Accuſations are not ſign'd, nor any Security offer'd to bear us harmleſs, in Caſe of Proſecution by thoſe whom they would have us to accuſe as Criminals.

Country-m. Juſt ſo they ſerv'd my old Maſter, which brought moſt of his Troubles upon him; and notwithſtanding the Service he did the Publick, his pretended Friends let him die a Priſoner for an inconſiderable Debt, after he had receiv'd thoſe murdering Blows by Aſſaſſins, which brought his Life to a Period. And inſtead of giving any Relief to his Widow and Fatherleſs Children, ſome of thoſe, who would take it very ill not to be accounted Whigs, ſet up, and promoted another *Obſervator*, which was as much as in them lay to deprive the poor Gentlewoman and her Children of the Allowance they have from the Profits of this Paper; but their Deſign has prov'd abortive, as 'twas juſt it ſhould: And I leave the World to judge, Maſter, whether they that murder'd the Husband and Father, and thoſe that would ſtarve the Widow and Children, be not equally criminal?

Obſ. Enough of that, *Roger*; we leave the Promoters of that other *Obſervator*, to read their Puniſhment in their Loſs and Diſappointment; towards which they cannot charge us with having anywiſe contributed, tho' they gave us Provocation enough, by publiſhing a Lie to the World in their firſt Paper; That this was a Counterfeit, and ſpreading it every where, That the Widow's Name was only made Uſe of as a Sham, and, That we allow'd her Nothing.

Country-m. May all ſuch unjuſt Practices have the like Fate, Maſter. In the mean Time I ſhould think it proper you give ſome Advice to the Authors of thoſe Letters juſt now mention'd, tho' you take no Notice of the Perſons they accuſe for taking Bribes to prevent a Captain of a Man of War's being try'd for making Uſe of the Queen's Men and Proviſions to ſail a Ship fraighted on his own Accompt to *Lisbon*, and for abuſing his Officers, Ship's Crew, and Maſters of Merchant-Men.

Obſ. Yes, *Roger*, I will; and that I may kill two Birds with one Stone, I ſhall give the ſame Advice to thoſe who ſent us a Complaint, That ſome employ'd in her Majeſty's Service, endeavour'd to ſuborn Witneſſes to ſwear, That a lawful Prize was a Ship employ'd on purpoſe to carry on a colluſive Trade: And my Advice is, *Roger*, That ſuch Perſons make their Application to both Houſes of Parliament, and prove their Allegations, and there's no Doubt of having the Criminals ſo puniſh'd, as to be a Terror to others; which is the beſt Way to prevent the like for Time to come. And for the Encouragement of ſuch as can make out their Complaints, *Roger*, I ſhall put them in Mind, That the Houſe of Lords, in their Addreſs to the Queen, preſented the 31ſt of *March*, 1704. repreſented to her Majeſty, "That the Diſcovery "of any Miſcarriages in the Management of the "Victualling, ought by all Means to be encou-"rag'd; that it was a Service to the Publick: and "that *Charles*, *Richard*, and *James Hoar*, deſerv'd a "Reward and Recompence ſuitable to the Charge "and Trouble they had been at in diſcovering the "ſaid Abuſes.

Country-m. I remember that very well, Maſter, and am glad you put our preſent Complainers in Mind of it; for no Doubt they will find our Houſe of Lords as juſt and generous to them, if they can prove their Complaints. But enough of this at preſent, Maſter; here's a Letter which I am ſure you will take Notice of.

Obſ. What is it, *Roger*?

Country-m. It is a Letter, Maſter, from ſome good and charitably diſpos'd People, who are mov'd with Compaſſion towards the numerous Widows and Fatherleſs Children of our poor Sea-men; and propoſe a Method for their Relief. I'll read it, Maſter.

Obſ. With all my Heart, *Roger*. God has declar'd himſelf *to be a Judge to the Widow, and a Father to the Fatherleſs*; ſo that if any Perſons have had a Hand, by Miſmanagement or Neglect, in making ſo many Widows and Fatherleſs, tho' they may eſcape being diſcover'd and puniſh'd by Man, they will find the Omniſcient and Almighty God a Judge that can neither be deceiv'd nor corrupted, and a Father that will not let any Wrong done his Children, paſs without due Puniſhment.

Country-m. Hold, Maſter, the Beaus and Wits will laugh, and ſay you Cant.

Obſ. I deſpiſe thoſe that contemn Religion, *Roger*. Go on with your Letter.

Country-m. 'Tis thus, Sir.

"*Mr. Obſervator*,

"WE take Notice, with great Satisfaction, that "in many of your *Obſervators*, you ſhew a "juſt Regard to the great and many Hardſhips put "upon the poor Sea-men of *England*, whom all a-"gree to be very uſeful, and to deſerve the Com-"paſſion of their Country, ſince in the Service of "it many thouſands of 'em have loſt both Lives "and Limbs, not only in Ships of War, but in "Merchant-Ships, which are equally uſeful for the "Good and Benefit of the whole Nation; and by "that Means leave many Widows and young Fa-"therleſs Children in a poor and deplorable Con-"dition.

"And whereas we ſee frequently, that her Ma-"jeſty, out of her tender Compaſſion to her poor "and indigent Subjects, upon due Application, "and full Proof of their Loſſes by Fire, *&c.* rea-"dily grants them a general Brief for the Reparati-"on of their Loſſes; therefore we do verily believe, "if due Application were made to her Majeſty,

"either

" either by some of those poor Widows, or any o-
" ther, in their Behalf, her Majesty would readily
" grant a general Brief for those who are Sufferers
" for the Nation's Service, since the Charge would
" lie upon none but those who think their Charity
" well bestow'd for that Purpose.

" We can foresee but one Objection against this
" great and necessary Piece of Charity, *viz.* Who
" are fit to be trusted with the Distribution of it?
" As to which, we think, that the Master and As-
" sistants of the *Trinity-House*, with the Advice of
" the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of *London*, would
" be the most fit and acceptable Persons.

" Sir, We wish you would give some Hints of
" this Matter in your *Observator*, by which some
" good People may be influenc'd to assist those poor
" indigent Creatures to obtain a general Brief by
" her Majesty's Authority, which doubtless would
" obtain large Contributions. This, with our
" Prayers to God for its Success, we recommend to
" your prudent Management.

Dec. 18. 1707. *Yours, &c.*

Obs. The Letter is so much to the Purpose, *Roger*, and the Proposal so charitable and just, that I think best to insert it as it is. And as no Objection can be made against the Trustees propos'd, so, in my Opinion, *Roger*, some of the Magistrates of *London*, and of the Members of *Trinity-House*, are the fittest Persons to make Application to her Majesty about it. None, I think, are more oblig'd by Duty and Honour to promote this Design, than the Magistrates of our noble *Emporium*, which owes the Wealth and Grandeur, that Heaven has bless'd it with, chiefly to Trade; and there's no Doubt but the Citizens, who know of what Importance the Encouragement of Sea-men is to Commerce, would contribute handsomely and chearfully to such a necessary Piece of Charity.

Country-m. I doubt not, Master, but the Blessings of those who are ready to perish, I mean the Widows and Fatherless Children of the poor Sea-men, will come upon the Heads of the Propasers and Promoters of so good a Design: And I should think it proper, Master, that some of those Widows, in the Name of the rest, apply themselves, in an orderly Manner, to some of our City-Magistrates, and of the Members of *Trinity-House*, to procure such a Brief for them; and the sooner the better, considering the Season of the Year; by which, many of them must needs suffer thro' Cold, as well as thro' Hunger.

Obs. Very well, *Roger*. Pray speak also to thy Representatives in Parliament, and propose it to their Consideration, whether a Bill may not be proper to deduct something annually, in Proportion to their Sallaries and Perquisites, from all such as have profitable Posts in the Admiralty, Navy-Office, Victualling-Office, in the Commission for Transport-Service, in that for the Sick and Wounded, and Exchange of Prisoners, and in her Majesty's Yards and Docks, to make a Fund for the Relief of the Widows and Children of those Sea-men, which are kill'd or drown'd in her Majesty's Service.

Country-m. Hold, Master, now you may be sure all the Under-spur-Leathers will open against you, and run you down.

Obs. 'Tis long since I learn'd to despise the Snarls of little Animals, *Roger*. I say nothing but what's reasonable; they that live by our Navy, have the most Reason to contribute to the poor Widows and Children of Mariners, that die on Board it. I believe every Body will agree, *Roger*, that such as enjoy those profitable Posts, may easily save, out of one Month's superfluous Expences, as much as would settle a very good Fund for the Relief of those deplorable Objects of Charity: And I think it much more reasonable, that Clerks and *Commis* should want Gold-Watches in their Pockets, and Wigs fit for Men of Quality, on their Heads, than the poor Sea-mens Widows and Children should want Bread to eat, when the Servants of the Navy grow luxurious with the Nation's Money.

Country-m. I do also think it reasonable, Master, that all the Commission-Officers on Board the Fleet, should be oblig'd to pay something annually, in Proportion to their Allowance, for that charitable Use. I am sure it is more reasonable they should do so, than that the poor Sea-men should pay 6 *d. per* Month out of their Wages, towards *Greenwich-Hospital*; and that it may be collected in the same Manner, and by the same Persons, without putting the Publick to any more Charge.

Obs. Indeed, *Roger*, considering the many thousands the Government pays annually to those employ'd in and about the Navy, a very small Deduction *per* Pound, or otherwise, if our Superiors think fit, might be a handsome Fund for the Relief of the poor Widows and Fatherless we speak of; especially if those who furnish the Navy by the Great, with Necessaries, such as Timber-Merchants, and those who deal in Sails, Cordage, Beef, Bisket, Beef, Pork, Pease, and other Things requisite to equip the Fleet, were also oblig'd to make some small Allowance towards it: For since Noblemen and Gentlemens Stewards, *&c.* have generally something allow'd by those who furnish their Masters with what they want, certainly those who furnish the Crown, may as well afford it; for we are not to doubt, but their Prices are as high in Proportion to the Nature of the Commodity. I am apt to think, *Roger*, few of those who have profitable Posts in the Offices and Employments above-mention'd, would grudge to allow some small Deduction for such a charitable Use.

Country-m. I am certain, Master, a great many of our Sea-Officers will heartily curse and swear at you, for your Proposal.

Obs. I don't value it, *Roger*; that will hurt themselves, and not me. However, since you put me in Mind of it, I shall also propose, that they be oblig'd to pay, for the Use above-mention'd, all the Money which the Law enjoins to be paid for Cursing, Swearing, Drunkenness, *&c.* when convicted of it; and that any who hear or see such Things on Board, be admitted Evidence in the same Manner, as those who hear or see the like committed on Shore. Besides, *Roger*, our Sea-Captains have the least Reason, of any Men in the World, to be against it; for when they are render'd unfit for Service by Age, Infirmity, or other Accident, they are provided for by Pensions during Life; and if slain, their Wives and Children are likewise allow'd large Bounties, which is always included in the Estimate of the Navy, and by Consequence paid for by the Nation.

This Day is publish'd,

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